

sary legislation perfected, it is estimated that although the line embraces much bold and costly work; the entire road can be completed in three years.

I am not sure that I comprehend the precise import of the second inquiry, addressed to me by the Honorable House, respecting "the *proceeds* from travel, tonnage and freight *expenses* which upon the completion of the road will be *diverted* from the *main stem* of the B. & O. R. R., and from the Washington branch of said road." Supposing, however, that I am desired to state to what extent, in my opinion, the revenues of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, from its main stem and the Washington branch, will be impaired in consequence of the construction of the Metropolitan Railroad; I have the honor to reply, that the construction of the latter road is expected rather to improve than to impair those revenues.

The travelled distance between the Capitol and the West being shortened by 49 miles, it is reasonably anticipated that a great number of persons who would otherwise not travel over our main stem on the Washington branch, will then pass over both in order to take Washington city into their route, not only for Baltimore, but for Philadelphia, New York and the North generally.

As every current of travel draws after it, a certain amount of business, and as an increase of traffic will enable us to offer better and cheaper facilities to the public, and thus to augment our revenues still further in the most legitimate manner; it is believed that the enhancement of profit on the main stem west of the Metropolitan Railroad, will more than compensate for any loss on the Eastern end, while the additional travel attracted to the Washington branch will probably be equal to that portion of its present patronage which may be lost.

Besides, the Metropolitan branch is expected to give a new and powerful impetus to the growth of Washington city, and this is an object of much importance to the business of our main stem, and especially to that of the Washington branch, as it is also to the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland. Adding this consideration to those previously stated, the House will perceive, that upon an enlarged and liberal view of the mere question of profit to be derived from the main stem and the Washington branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the construction of the Metropolitan Railroad will appear to be advantageous. It may be doubted whether its advantages in that respect are so clear and conspicuous as to have justified the undertaking, if it had been prompted by no other motive; but they are sufficiently probable and important to acquit this Company of imprudence in construct-